Newes out of *Germanie.*

A moſt wonderfull and true *diſcourſe of a cruell murderer,* who had kylled in his life tyme, nine hundred, *threeſcore and odde perſons, among which* ſix of them were his owne children, begotten *on a young woman which he forceablie kept in a* Caue ſeuen yeeres, with the manner how he was taken, and the aboundaunce of wealth that was found in the ſaid Caue: executed at Berkeſtell on the 14. of Iune.

*Tranſlated and publiſhed accor-*ding to the Dutch and *French Coſtyes. By G.P.* 1584.

Imprinted for George Pen, dwelling at Ipſwich.

A Letter written to a noble personage of the Cittie of Mentz, by a Gentleman of credit, who sawe this murderer executed.

RIght honourable and my especiall good freend, I haue not at this time any newes wherewith to acquaint you, but only this straunge and admirable occasion which lately happened: the truth whereof I trust my credit is sufficient with your honour to confirme, and the rather, for that I not only heard the murderers examination, but was also an eye witnesse of his death. And albeit it may seeme incredible, yet thus much I can assure you, that I saw the scrole which was found in the murtherers Caue, wherin he had written the names of all the that he had murdred, and I heard him also affirme it with his owne mouth. The discourse thereof followeth, which I commit to your iudgement, and so I commend your honor to the heauenly protection.

A rare and

Straunge Discourse, of a notorious and cruell Murderer, named Christeman Gempertinga, who leading a bloody life of longe *time, and beeing at last apprehended therefore* confessed that in his life time he had slaine nine hundred, three score and foure persons, and entended to murder still, till he had made vp the account of a thousand. For which horrible murders, hee was executed in the Towne of Berkessell, neere to the Cittie of Mentz in Germanie.

IN the Forrest of Frasburg, within a league of Berkessell, there liued for the space of 13. yeeres one Christeman Gempertinga of Corpen, two leagues distaunce from Collen, whose only maintenaūce was by robbing and spoyling of the passingers, and such a fit

a fit and commodious place for his purpose he had prouided himselfe of, as he might at pleasure discerne them that trauelled on the hye wayes, either to Mentz, Dietenhausen, Treuers, or Duche de Luxenbourg, to which places Merchauntes did ordinarily trafique, because they were Townes of great commoditie for their affaires. And as they trauailed thorow this Forrest, he and his companions would set vppon them, and hauing robbed them of their goods and treasure, would likewise dispoyle them of their liues, and afterward cause them to bee throwen into a deepe pit in the Forrest, which he had ordained for the purpose: as for their apparell, weapons and such like, he caryed to his Caue, which in time was so well stored with Harquebuses, Swordes, Murrians, Partisans and Corsletes, that a great strength could not haue ouer come

him and his companyons.

And for the goods, which he tooke from the Merchauntes and passengers, his Caue was so well furnished there with, beeing of all sorts of Merchandise, and wares belonging to the Allemaignes and other Nations: as the quantitie thereof was iudged sufficient to furnish a Fayre and the value thereof esteemed more worth, then 70000. Florins of gold of Allemaigne. And besides, there was founde in his Caue also when he was taken, so great store of wine, bread, flesh, peysons, & figs, as would haue sufficed him for one whole yeere. Amongst all the passengers that trauelled thoro wt this Forrest, it chaunced one day, that a proper womā of Popert neere ỹ Rhine a Coopers daughter went to see her brethren & had occasion to passe that way, this villanous murderer hauing espyed her, made hast to her, and hauing dispoiled her of such thinges as she had about

about her, intended to murder her, as he had don all the other: but being ouercome with the sight of her fayre face and body, helde hys handes, and intreated her to keepe him cõpany there in that place, and be contented with that kinde of life which he vsed, otherwise he would likewise kil her. The woman feare-full of death, and seing the horrible massacre of dead bodyes in the pit before her, whom she should keepe company if she denyed his request: consented vnto him, and promised neuer to betray or reueale him to any, whereby his life might stand in any hazard. On this condition he lead her with him into his Caue and there she liued with him for the space of 7. yeres, in which time she had 6. Children by him, which so soone as they were borne, hee would take them and breake theyr neckes and pull them by the feete and head to streatch them in length and afterward would goe hange them

them vp on a high place that he had prouided for the nonce: and then he would stand looking on them, and seeing the winde to make them waue vp and downe, this merciles villaine would say: Daunce daunce my loouing Children, for Gempertinga your Father dooth sounde you a daunce. It was a meruailous greefe and great hart breaking to the poore woman, to see her tender Infantes vsed so despitefully by theyr owne Father, and gladly she would haue borne rid of that kinde of lyfe, but that she could not get thence by any meanes: for hee had tyed her with a chaine, and she could goe no further then the Chaine gaue her libertie, which pollicie he vsed, least she should escape away while hee and his companions were abroad, and so his dealings might be discouered. After that he had robbed and killed for a long season, he grewe doubtfull of his companions, and euery day did more and more mistrust

truſt them: ſo that at length he deuiſed a meane to eaſe his doubt, and one day making merry amongſt them, he conuayed in theyr meate and drinke ſuch a violent and extreame kinde of poyſon, as they all dyed thereof within ſyx or ſix houres after: which he perceiuing, threwe them into the pit to the other bodyes that they had murdered.

When he was thus rid of his companions, and had no body left with him but the woman, he wexed ſomwhat doubtful of her lykewiſe: but God willing to reueale the horrible villainies of this murderer, cauſed the woman to be verie importunat in requeſt to him, that ſhe might go ſee her frends, and wrought alſo in his minde ſo accordingly, that hee gaue her leaue to goe, aſſuring himſelfe on her promiſe, that ſhe would neuer reueale him. She went and ſawe her Parents, and returned againe without vttering any worde of him, which made him the more wil-

willing to suffer her to go againe, and entring the strætes of Berkessel, she sawe little children playing, the sight wherof, and the remembrance how villainously her owne children were murdred, caused her to fal into extreeme complaintes and passions, at last she brake forth into these doloraus spæches. O God which doost maintaine all thinges, and from whome the death of my children cannot be hidden, & who knowest the promise I haue made by constraint: beholde me in mercie, and pittie the anguishes I haue endured in my flesshe and blood.

These her complaintes were so pittiful both in shewe & hearing, ỹ many gathered about her to know the cause of her lamentations, and very earnest they were with her to vnderstand the cause of her passionate afflictions: but they could by no meanes preuaile in theyr intets, for that she sayde, she had protested secrecie of her greefes by solempne oath

oath, and she would not utter them to any. Some of them that stoode by & heard her wordes, informed the Justices in ỹ Towne of the matter, wherupon she was brought before them, and there she cõtinued in the same obstinate opinion she dyd before: neuertheles, they labored styl with her, & gaue her to vnderstand, that a wilful oath might endammage her soule, and by reuealing it, she might escape many daungerous threatninges for the contrary. By which perswasions she animated her self, and from the beginning to the end she discoursed the whole circumstaunce by particulers, of the murderer and his lyuing: wherevppon, the Justices concluded with her, what course she should take to preuayle in this matter, both to betray the murderer, and saue her self blameles. Not long after they put in readines thyrtie wel appointed Soldiours, who should folow the woman a farre off tyl they foũd the

Caue

Caue: and shee (according to the Iustices direction) toke with her a bagge of Pease, which she scattered along the way as she went, by which meanes the Soldiours could not misse of the right way to the Caue. When she came to the Caue, the murderer was very glad of her returne, and testing familiarly with her, at last he layde him downe on the ground, and laide his head in her lappe, where by her rubbing and soft scratching it, he fel a sleepe. Within a whyle after, the Soldiors came to the Caue, and finding him thus sleeping, they laid handes on him, and bound him so, that he could not resist them: which hee perceyuing, cried out, O thou disloyall whore, it is long since I misdoubted this thy trechery, & I thought to haue sped thee with the rest of thy fellowes. The Soldiours brought him with them to Berkessel, where being put to the torment, he confessed

sed all his former villainies, & that he had murdered 964. persons, and howe he intended to continew in murdering styl, tyl he had slaine so many as came to a thousand, & then he would murder no more: and to verifie his wordes, the Soldiours presented the Justices a scrowle, wherein the names were written by his owne hand, of all them that he had murdered, and on what seuerall dayes he murdered them. Heervpon he was condemned, and had his legges and armes, and bones broken with an yron instrument fit for the purpose, and afterward was laide on a Cart wheele without the Towne (as it is the maner in other Countries) where he liued for the space of nine daies after, being daily sustained with drinke and meat, to maintayne his lyfe in some extreame paine: and all the goodes that were found in his Caue, were brought to the Towne, and they

and

and the woman kept in holde: the Magistrates being not as yet resolued how to deale with them. It is thought, that had not the Soldiors found him so sleeping, they could hardly haue taken him, he had so many Calliuers, Harquebuses, and Dags ready charged in his Caue, & was of himselfe such a stoute, strong and actiue man, & the place where he was, did serue him in all respects able to resist a great number.

The consideration of this straunge and monstrous discourse, I committe to your honours good construction, accounting it a parte of my duety, to make your honour acquainted with any notable thing I can heare of: And so I humbly take my leaue.

FINIS.